National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program – Enhancing the Prosperity of Small Farms & Rural Agricultural Communities

Supplemental Request for Applications for Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005

Application Due Date: October 5, 2004



U.S. Department of Agriculture

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL RESEARCH INITIATIVE COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

SUPPLEMENTAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.206.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is requesting comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program. Such comments will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Comments should be submitted as provided in the **DATES** portion of this announcement.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Program Liaison Staff; Office of Extramural Programs; USDA-CSREES; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the National Research Initiative Supplemental RFA – Enhancing the Prosperity of Small Farms and Rural Agricultural Communities.

DATES: All applications must be received by close of business (COB) (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time) on October 5, 2004. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this RFA are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES requests applications for the National Research Initiative (NRI) Competitive Grants Program – Enhancing the Prosperity of Small Farms and Rural Agricultural Communities for fiscal years (FYs) 2004 and 2005 to foster interdisciplinary studies and improve our understanding of the interactions between the economic, social, biological and environmental components important to small farms and rural economic development. Approximately \$5 million is available for awards under this solicitation.

This notice identifies program objectives for integrated projects. It describes eligibility criteria and matching requirements for each project, and instructs applicants regarding the submission and review of applications. CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING NRI POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

***** PLEASE READ *****

Changes in the RFA

This RFA invites applications for integrated research, extension, and education grants. Eligibility, requirements for matching funds and types of projects are different for integrated research, extension, and education grants as compared to research grants; thus, applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire RFA and contact the National Program Leader with any questions. The NRI will use no more than 20% of available funds to support integrated research, extension, and education grants (see Part I, A.); these funds will not be distributed uniformly across all NRI programs.

Deadline Date Changes

Starting with FY 2003, application submission deadline dates were changed from "postmarked by" dates to "received by" dates. Applications must be received in the Proposal Services Unit/CSREES by 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time, on or prior to the applicable deadline date indicated in this RFA. In FY 2005, the standard NRI RFA will establish deadlines that will change from the FY 2004 deadlines and move the NRI to a series of deadlines distributed over the fiscal year. Deadlines will also be shifted in future years to facilitate the implementation of electronic grants processes.

Funding Limit Guidelines

The NRI has instituted funding limit guidelines for all application types. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to these guidelines.

Frequently Asked Questions

For answers to questions frequently asked by those doing business with CSREES, please refer to http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/businessfag.html on the Agency website.

Current and Pending Support

Current and pending support information (on Form CSREES-2005) is now required only for the Project Directors as listed on the Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002). In addition to completing Form CSREES-2005, Project Directors also should include either a brief statement of objectives or project summaries for all projects listed in Current and Pending Support that could be deemed through the review process as potentially overlapping with the submitted application based on project title, including formula funding and other forms of intramural support.

Materials on the Internet

Please see http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/nri/nri.html on the CSREES website to access information and resources specific to the NRI.

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PART I-FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

The authority to support research projects through this program is contained in 7 U.S.C. 450i(b). Under this authority, subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary may award competitive research grants, for periods not to exceed five years, for the support of research projects to further the programs of the USDA.

In FY 2004, Section 733 of the General Provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004 (Division A of Pub. L. 108-199) provides CSREES with the authority to use up to twenty percent of the amount made available in the Act for the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program (NRI), to carry out a competitive grants program under the same terms and conditions as those provided in Section 401 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) (7 U.S.C. 7621).

Section 401 of AREERA authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a research, extension, and education competitive grants program to address critical emerging U.S. agricultural and rural issues related to future food production; environmental quality and natural resource management; farm income; or rural, economic and business and community development policy. In addition, the Secretary of agriculture is authorized to make grants that address priority mission areas related to: a) agricultural genome, b) food safety, food technology and human nutrition, c) new and alternative uses and production of agricultural commodities and products, d) agricultural biotechnology, e) natural resource management, including precision agriculture, and f) farm efficiency and profitability, including the viability and competitiveness of small and medium sized dairy, livestock, crop and other commodity operations.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of the NRI Program is to support research, extension, and education grants that address key problems of national, regional, and multistate importance in sustaining all components of agriculture (farming, ranching, forestry including urban and agroforestry, aquaculture, rural communities, human nutrition, processing, etc.). Providing this support requires that NRI advance fundamental sciences in support of agriculture and coordinate opportunities to build on these discoveries. Building on these discoveries will necessitate new efforts in education and extension that deliver science-based knowledge to people, allowing them to make informed practical decisions. Hence, the NRI will now accept applications for fundamental research, mission-linked research, and integrated research, extension, and education projects. However, applicants should know that the NRI will use no more than 20% of available funds to support integrated projects (see Part I, A.) and that these funds will not be distributed uniformly, but targeted to specific priorities. Targeted priorities for integrated projects are clearly identified within the detailed descriptions of program offerings.

In December 2003, CSREES solicited applications for NRI funds through an initial announcement, which is available online at http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/rfas/04_nri.html. Since December, the Agency has published a number of supplemental NRI RFAs, including this one which announces a new NRI program. Potential applicants to this program will want to reference some of the information in the initial NRI announcement.

The NRI is administered by the Competitive Programs (CP) unit, CSREES of USDA. The purpose of the NRI is to support high priority fundamental and mission-linked research of importance in the biological, environmental, physical, and social sciences relevant to agriculture, food, and the environment. For this purpose, the following definition applies:

Integrated: Integrated means to bring the three components of the agricultural knowledge system (research, education, and extension) together around a problem or activity. In FY 2004, the NRI is seeking to support projects that bring together at least two of these components and address identified agricultural problems as described in the initial NRI announcement and supplemental RFAs.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Approximately \$5 million is available for awards under this solicitation.

B. Type of Applications

In FY 2004, this program will be accepting only new applications. New applications have not been previously submitted to the NRI. They will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V–Application Review Requirements.

C. Project Types

1. Integrated Project Grants: Integrated project applications may involve any combination of research, education, and extension activities, with the provision that every project must include at least two of the three stated components (i.e., research, education, and extension) required for integration as defined in Part VIII, H. of the initial NRI announcement. Integrated project applications may include, for example, institutions that conduct research; synthesize previous, ongoing and future research; develop curricula and build educational and research capacity; and transfer information to producers, end users, and the public. The type and number of participating institutions should be appropriate to the project proposed, and should include all participants necessary for successful completion of the projects. Integrated projects are expected to generate new knowledge and/or apply existing knowledge quickly through outreach and the dissemination of information on specific issues in agriculture where results may be visible over the short term.

Dependent on the merits of proposals received, CSREES will ensure that a portion of project grants will be awarded to proposals in which the lead institutions (recipient of the Federal funds) are small, mid-sized, and minority-serving institutions. When determining eligibility for these grant types, the following definitions apply:

- (a) Small and mid-sized institutions are academic institutions with a current total enrollment of 15,000 or less including graduate and undergraduate and full- and part-time students and that are no higher than the 50th percentile of academic institutions funded by the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program in the past three years and are not within the top 100 Federally funded institutions (See table at the end of this document for an alphabetical listing of the most successful institutions.). (Applicants applying under this category should indicate the current total enrollment of the institution in a cover letter.) An institution in this instance is an organization that possesses a significant degree of autonomy.
- (b) Minority-serving institution means an academic institution whose enrollment of a single minority group or a combination of minority groups (as defined in Part VIII, H.of the initial NRI announcement) exceeds fifty percent of the total enrollment, including graduate and undergraduate and full- and part-time students. (Applicants applying under this category should indicate the current total enrollment of the institution in a cover letter.) An institution in this instance is an organization that possesses a significant degree of autonomy.

Other institutions or organizations involved in small- and mid-sized institution eligible projects or minority-serving institution eligible projects need not meet the criteria described in the definitions for small- and mid-sized institution or minority-serving institutions.

2. Bridge Grants: Bridge grants are designed to assist small, mid-sized, and minority-serving institutions that have not previously been successful in obtaining competitive grants under subsection (b) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 450i(b)) (i.e., NRI) in order to sustain and enhance important collaborations and activities that might lead to future program success or success in obtaining other grants. A flow chart for determining eligibility for bridge grants is included at the end of this document. Institutions eligible for bridge grants will be considered for a one-time infusion of up to \$100,000 if an application is considered meritorious but ranks below the funding cutoff during the peer review process.

Applicants may not apply directly for bridge grants. Bridge grants will be awarded only to eligible small- and mid-sized institutions and minority-serving institutions (as defined under 1(a) and 1(b), above) which are **not** among the most successful universities and colleges for receiving Federal funds for science and engineering research. See table at the end of this document for an alphabetical listing of the most successful institutions. Awards will be made after peer review of an application places the application below the funding cutoff. Applicants applying under this category should indicate whether the institution qualifies as a small, mid-sized institution or a minority-serving instution (see Part VIII, H. of the initial NRI announcement) along with the current total enrollment of the institution in a cover letter that accompanies their proposal.

D. Integrated Opportunity

The following specific opportunity is provided as a base from which applications can be developed. This description provides boundaries on the scope of the program. The NRI encourages submission of innovative projects that are "high-risk," as well as innovative applications with potential for more immediate application.

Note to multidisciplinary research teams: The NRI recognizes the value of research performed as a team effort and recommends the following be taken into consideration when assembling a project team and developing an application for funding. To be competitive, the number of objectives and the level of personnel involved in the application should be appropriate to the NRI program and to the activities proposed. A clear management strategy should be provided which identifies the contribution of each member of the team.

66.0 Enhancing the Prosperity of Small Farms and Rural Agricultural Communities

Investigators are encouraged to contact National Program Leaders Siva Sureshwaran at (202) 720-7536 (or at ssureshwaran@csrees.usda.gov to arrange a telephone consultation) or Diana Jerkins (202) 401-6996 (djerkins@csrees.usda.gov) with questions about the suitability of research topics.

Integrated research, education and extension project awards for this program are expected to have a total budget (including indirect costs) of no more than \$500,000 for 2-4 years of support. Approximately \$5 million is available for awards under this solicitation. This RFA is a combined solicitation for FYs 2004 and 2005. It is anticipated that this program will be offered again as part of the regular NRI RFA in FY 2006.

Sustaining the health and security of U.S. agriculture requires improved profitability and long-term prosperity for producers and rural communities, with particular attention to the viability and competitiveness of small and medium-sized operations. Prosperous small farms and rural communities are a function of balance between economic, social, environmental and biological factors. Although prior research has been conducted on each of these factors, little is known about the interplay between the factors, as related to small farms and rural economic development.

The purpose of this program is to foster interdisciplinary studies and improve our understanding of the interactions between the economic, social, biological and environmental components important to small farms and rural economic development. Applicants are expected to propose hypotheses that are testable and to use quantitative approaches. Projects should address small farms, rural agricultural communities, or both small farms and rural communities when interrelated.

Proposals are sought that develop and test hypotheses in the following priority areas: (a) comparisons of approaches to environmental management and compliance related to the prosperity of rural communities and/or profitability of agricultural products; (b) analysis of the interactions that affect high return production, processing and delivery channels, and in turn, enhance profitability of small farms; (c) evaluation of the interplay between social, economic, biological and environmental factors that affect the adoption of new agricultural technology, management and/or foster rural agribusiness development; or (d) identification of emerging opportunities and threats for small to medium sized farms, and associated rural communities over the next 20 years. An example of a successful outcome of an integrated project supported by this program is the development, testing and implementation of new models and assessment tools for small farms and rural communities in one of the four priority areas.

During the review process, applications that address these program priorities will be given higher priority for funding. Proposed projects, that address topics of great importance and are of exceptional merit, that have not been listed as priorities will be reviewed and may be funded within the limits of the program budget. If a project is funded, beginning in the second year of funding, at least one member of the project team will be required to attend annual investigator meetings. Reasonable travel expenses may be claimed as part of the project budget (see Part IV, B., 12.).

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

For integrated projects, the eligibility requirements for the NRI are as follows: except where otherwise prohibited by law, State agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, research foundations maintained by colleges or universities, private research organizations with established and demonstrated capacities to perform research or technology transfer, Federal research agencies, and national laboratories are eligible to apply for and receive a competitive grant. The bridge grants have some notable differences from these requirements. See Part II, C., 2. for details.

Unsolicited applications will not be considered and applications from scientists at non-United States organizations will not be accepted. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

B. Request for Determination

If an applicant considers itself a minority-serving institution and wishes to be considered for a bridge grant (as described in Part II, C., 1(b)), but is unable to meet the enrollment criteria specified in the Definitions section of the initial NRI announcement, the applicant must submit to CSREES documentation supporting the request. This documentation must be submitted as part of the requestor's application package which must be received by CSREES by October 5, 2004. The Secretary or designated individual will determine whether the group or groups identified are eligible under this Program.

The Request for Determination must be submitted as a separate letter to the relevant National Program Leader (identified in Part II, D. of this RFA). The legend at the top of the letter must read: "REQUEST FOR DETERMINATION". In addition, the following information must be provided in the order specified below:

- 1. A description of each minority group that is being submitted for determination;
- 2. Data or studies supporting this group's designation as a minority group; and
- 3. Data indicating that enrollment of the minority group(s) exceeds fifty percent of the total enrollment at the academic institution, including graduate and undergraduate and full- and part-time students.

C. Cost Sharing or Matching

For integrated projects, if a grant is for applied research that is commodity-specific and not of national scope, the grant recipient is required to match the USDA funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources with cash and/or in-kind contributions.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Address to Request Application Package

Program application materials are available at the CSREES Funding Opportunities web site (http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/forms.html). If you do not have access to the web page or have trouble downloading material and you would like a hard copy, you may contact the Proposal Services Unit, Competitive Programs, USDA/CSREES at (202) 401-5048. When calling the Proposal Services Unit, please indicate that you are requesting the RFA and associated application forms for the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program –Enhancing the Prosperity of Small Farms and Rural Agricultural Communities. These materials also may be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing address (not e-mail) and phone number to psb@csrees.usda.gov. State that you want a copy of the RFA and the associated application forms for the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program – Enhancing the Prosperity of Small Farms and Rural Agricultural Communities.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

The applications should be prepared following the guidelines and the instructions below. Each application must contain the following elements in the order indicated:

1. General

- (a) Use the following guidelines to prepare an application. Proper preparation of applications will assist reviewers in evaluating the merits of each application in a systematic, consistent fashion:
- (b) Prepare the application on only one side of the page using standard size (8 1/2" x 11") white paper, one-inch margins, typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point font, and single or double spaced. Use an easily readable font face (e.g., Geneva, Helvetica, Times Roman).
- (c) Number each page of the application sequentially, starting with the Project Description, including the budget pages, required forms, and any appendices.

- (d) Staple the application in the upper left-hand corner. Do not bind. An original and 14 copies of the application are required along with 2 additional copies of the "Project Summary," Form CSREES-2003, as a separate attachment. Prior to mailing, compare the application with the checklist found at the end of this document to ensure the application is complete.
- (e) Include original illustrations (photographs, color prints, etc.) in all copies of the application to prevent loss of meaning through poor quality reproduction.
- (f) The contents of the application should be assembled in the following order:

Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)

Table of Contents

Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003)

Project Description (see instructions for page limitations)

References to Project Description

Facilities and Equipment

Key Personnel (vitae and publications list)

Collaborative Arrangements (including letters of support)

Conflict-of-Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)

Results from Prior NRI Support (if applicable)

Budget (Form CSREES-2004)

Budget Narrative

Matching (if required)

Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)

Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)

Appendices to Project Description

Personal Data on Project Director(s) (Page B of Form CSREES-2002)

2. Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)

Page A

Each copy of each grant application must contain a Proposal Cover Page, Form CSREES-2002. One copy of the application, preferably the original, must contain the pen-and-ink signature(s) of the proposing PDs and the AOR, the individual who possesses the necessary authority to commit the organization's time and other relevant resources to the project. If there are more than three co-PDs for an application, please list additional co-PDs on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information and signatures) and attach to the Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002). Any proposed PD or co-PD whose signature does not appear on Form CSREES-2002 or attached additional sheets will not be listed on any resulting grant award. Complete both signature blocks located at the bottom of the Proposal Cover Page form. Please note that Form CSREES-2002 is comprised of two parts - Page A, which is the Proposal Cover Page, and Page B, which is the Personal Data on Project Director.

Form CSREES-2002 serves as a source document for the CSREES grant database; it is therefore important that it be accurately completed in its entirety, especially the e-mail addresses requested in Blocks 4.c. and 18.c. However, the following items are highlighted as having a high potential for errors or misinterpretations:

(a) Type of Performing Organization (Blocks 6.a. and 6.b.). For Block 6.a., a check should be placed in the appropriate box to identify the type of organization which is the legal recipient named in Block 1. Only one box

should be checked. For Block 6.b., please check as many boxes that apply to the affiliation of the PD listed in Block 16.

- (b) Title of Proposed Project (Block 7). The title of the project must be brief (140-character maximum, including spaces), yet represent the major thrust of the effort being proposed. Project titles are read by a variety of nonscientific people; therefore, highly technical words or phraseology should be avoided where possible. In addition, introductory phrases such as "investigation of," "research on," "education for," or "outreach that" should not be used.
- (c) Program to Which You Are Applying (Block 8). Enter "NRI Enhancing the Prosperity of Small Farms and Rural Agricultural Communities" and "66.0" should also be inserted in Block 8.
- (d) DUNS NO. (Data Universal Numbering System) (Block 11.). A DUNS number must be included for the legal recipient named in Block 1. (except applications from individuals). See Part VIII, J. of the initial NRI announcement for instructions on obtaining a DUNS number.
- (e) Type of Request (Block 14). Check "New".
- (f) Project Director (PD) (Blocks 16-19). Blocks 16-18 are used to identify the PD and Block 19 to identify co-PDs. If needed, additional co-PDs may be listed on a separate sheet of paper and attached to Form CSREES-2002, the Proposal Cover Page, with the applicable co-PD information and signatures. Listing multiple co-PDs, beyond those required for genuine collaboration, is discouraged.
- (g) Other Possible Sponsors (Block 21). List the names or acronyms of all other public or private sponsors including other agencies within USDA to which your application has been or might be sent. In the event you decide to send your application to another organization or agency at a later date, you must inform the identified CSREES program contact as soon as practicable. Submitting your application to other potential sponsors will not prejudice its review by CSREES; however, submitting the same (i.e., duplicate) application to another CSREES program is not permissible.

Page B

Page B should be submitted only with the original signature copy of the application and should be placed as the last page of the original copy of the application. This page contains personal data on the PD(s). CSREES requests this information in order to monitor the operation of its review and awards processes. This page will not be duplicated or used during the review process. Please note that failure to submit this information will in no way affect consideration of your application.

3. Table of Contents

For consistency and ease in locating information, each application must contain a detailed Table of Contents immediately following the Proposal Cover Page. The Table of Contents should contain page numbers for each component of the application. Page numbering should begin with the first page of the Project Description. A Table of Contents page is included at the end of this RFA for your convenience. It should be used in the preparation of an application.

4. Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003)

The application must contain a Project Summary, Form CSREES-2003. The summary should be approximately 250 words, contained within the box, placed immediately after the Table of Contents, and not numbered. The names and affiliated organizations of the PD and all co-PDs should be listed on this form, in addition to the title of the project. The summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on: overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives; plans to accomplish project goal(s); and relevance of the project to the goals of the NRI. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized. If there are more than three co-PDs for an application, please list additional co-PDs on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information) and attach to the Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003). Please check the "Standard Research Proposal" box on the upper right-hand portion of the form.

5. Project Description

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Description section may not exceed a total of 18 single- or double-spaced pages including figures and tables. These page limitations apply regardless of whether figures or tables are included. All pages, including those with figures and tables, should be numbered sequentially. Applications exceeding the applicable page limitation may be returned without review. These maximums have been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Project Descriptions must include all of the following:

- (a) Introduction. A clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives or research questions of the proposed project should be included. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project should be included in this section. All works cited should be referenced (see 6., References to Project Description, below).
- (b) Rationale and Significance. Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project. The specific relationship of the project's objectives to the potential long-range improvement in and sustainability of U.S. agriculture or to the particular program area should be shown clearly. These purposes are described under Part I, B., Purpose and Priorities. Any novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers should also be discussed in this section.
- (c) **Approach.** The activities proposed or problems being addressed must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described. Specifically, this section must include:
 - (1) A description of the activities proposed and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed;
 - (2) Methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the methods;
 - (3) Expected outcomes;
 - (4) Means by which results will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted;
 - (5) How results or products will be used;
 - (6) Pitfalls that may be encountered;

- (7) Limitations to proposed procedures; and
- (8) A full explanation of any materials, procedures, situations, or activities related to the project that may be hazardous to personnel, along with an outline or precautions to be exercised to avoid or mitigate the effects of such hazards.

6. References to Project Description

All references to works cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an acceptable journal format. References are not considered in the page-limitation for the Project Description.

7. Facilities and Equipment

Facilities and major items of equipment that are available for use or assignment to the proposed project during the requested period of support should be described. In addition, items of nonexpendable equipment necessary to conduct and successfully conclude the proposed project should be listed (including dollar amounts), and, if funds are requested for their acquisition, justified on a separate page and attached to the budget.

8. Key Personnel

The following should be included, as applicable:

- (a) The roles and responsibilities of the PD, co-PD, and/or collaborator should be clearly described; and
- (b) The vitae of the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel. This section should include vitae of all key persons who are expected to work on the project, whether or not CSREES funds are sought for their support. The vitae should be limited to two (2) pages each in length, excluding publications listings. The vitae should include a presentation of academic and research credentials, as applicable, e.g., earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and grants received. A chronological list of <u>all</u> publications in <u>refereed journals</u> during the past <u>four (4) years</u>, including those in press, must be provided for each project member for whom a curriculum vita is provided. Also list only those <u>non-refereed</u> technical publications that have <u>relevance</u> to the proposed project. All authors should be listed in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete reference as these usually appear in journals.

9. Collaborative Arrangements

If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application. See instructions in the application forms for completing Form CSREES-2004, Budget.

10. Conflict-of-Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)

A "Conflict-of-Interest List," Form CSREES-2007, must be provided for all individuals who have submitted a vitae in response to item 8. of this part. Each Form CSREES-2007 should list alphabetically, by the last names, the full names of the individuals in the following categories: (a) all co-authors on publications within the past four years, including pending publications and submissions; (b) all collaborators on projects within the past four

years, including current and planned collaborations; (c) all thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors within the past four years; and (d) all persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting or financial arrangement within the past four years, who stand to gain by seeing the project funded. This form is necessary to assist program staff in excluding from application review those individuals who have conflicts of interest with the personnel in the grant application. The program contact must be informed of any additional conflicts of interest that arise after the application is submitted.

11. Results from Prior NRI Support

If the PD or a co-PD has received NRI support in the past five years, information on results from that prior funding is required. This information will be used in the review of the application and is limited in length to one page per award. For each award, list the CSREES award number, the amount and period of support, the title of the project, a summary of the results of the completed work, the long-term effects of these results, and the publications resulting from the NRI award.

12. Budget

(a) Budget Form (Form CSREES-2004)

Prepare the Budget, Form CSREES-2004, in accordance with instructions provided with the application forms. A budget form is required for each year of requested support. In addition, a cumulative budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. If a project is funded, beginning in the second year of funding, at least one member of the project team will be required to attend annual investigator meetings. Reasonable travel expenses for at least one project team member to attend annual meetings, beginning in the second year of funding, may be included in the requested budget. The budget form may be reproduced as needed by applicants. Funds may be requested under any of the categories listed on the form, provided that the item or service for which support is requested is allowable under the authorizing legislation, the applicable statutes, regulations, and Federal cost principles, and these program guidelines, and can be justified as necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed project (see Part IV, D. for applicable funding restrictions). Applicants also must include a budget narrative to justify their budget requests (see section (b) below).

(b) Budget Narrative

All budget categories, with the exception of Indirect Costs, for which support is requested, must be individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget and justified on a separate sheet of paper and placed immediately behind the Budget form.

(c) Matching

For integrated projects, if an applicant concludes that matching funds are not required (as specified under Part III, C.), a justification should be included in the Budget Narrative. CSREES will consider this justification when ascertaining final matching requirements. CSREES retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements.

For those integrated projects where matching funds are required (as specified under Part III, C.), applications should include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Written verification means:

For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation, signed by the authorized organizational representative of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation; and (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period.

For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each contribution, signed by the authorized organizational representatives of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in-kind contribution; and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

The sources and the amount of all matching support from outside the applicant organization should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the application immediately following the Budget Narrative. All pledge agreements must be placed in the application immediately following the summary of matching support.

The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circulars A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local, and Tribal Governments, A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations, and the cost principles in the Federal Acquisition Regulation at 48 CFR 31.2 for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

13. Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)

All applications must contain Form CSREES-2005 listing other current public or private support (including inhouse support) to which the PD and co-PD(s) have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for the person(s) involved is included in the budget. Please follow the instructions provided on this form. Concurrent submission of identical or similar applications to the possible sponsors will not prejudice application review or evaluation by the CSREES. However, an application that duplicates or overlaps substantially with an application already reviewed and funded (or to be funded) by another organization or agency will not be funded under this program. Please note that the project being proposed should be included in the pending section of the form.

14. Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)

A number of situations encountered in the conduct of projects require special assurances, supporting documentation, etc., before funding can be approved for the project. In addition to any other situation that may exist with regard to a particular project, applications involving any of the following elements must comply with the additional requirements as applicable.

(a) Recombinant DNA or RNA Research

All key personnel identified in the application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the guidelines established by the National Institutes of Health entitled, "Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules," as revised. If your project proposes to use recombinant DNA or RNA techniques, you must so indicate by checking the "yes" box in Block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 (the Proposal Cover Page) and by completing Section A of Form CSREES-2008. For applicable applications recommended for funding, Institutional Biosafety Committee approval is required before CSREES funds will be released. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

(b) Animal Care

Responsibility for the humane care and treatment of live vertebrate animals used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. Where a project involves the use of living vertebrate animals for experimental purposes, all key personnel identified in an application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the applicable provisions of the Animal Welfare Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.), and the regulations promulgated thereunder by the Secretary in 9 CFR Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of these animals. If your project will involve these animals, you should check "yes" in Block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section B of Form CSREES-2008. In the event a project involving the use of live vertebrate animals results in a grant award, funds will be released only after the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee has approved the project. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

(c) Potection of Human Subjects

Responsibility for safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. Guidance on this issue is contained in the National Research Act, Pub. L. No. 93-348, as amended, and implementing regulations promulgated by the Department under 7 CFR Part 1c. If you propose to use human subjects in your project, you should check the "yes" box in Block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section C of Form CSREES-2008. In the event a project involving human subjects at risk is recommended for award, funds will be released only after the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved the research plan and CSREES has accepted documentation of the IRB approval. Please refer to the application forms for additional instructions.

15. Certifications

Note that by signing Form CSREES-2002, the Proposal Cover Page, the applicant is providing the certifications required by 7 CFR Part 3017, regarding Debarment and Suspension and Drug-Free Workplace, and 7 CFR Part 3018, regarding Lobbying. The certification forms are included in the application package for informational purposes only. These forms should not be submitted with the application since by signing Form CSREES-2002 your organization is providing the required certifications. If the project will involve a subcontractor or consultant, the subcontractor/consultant should submit a Form AD-1048, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions, to the grantee organization for retention in their records. This form should not be submitted to USDA.

16. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)

As outlined in 7 CFR Part 3407 (the CSREES regulations implementing NEPA), the environmental data for any proposed project is to be provided to CSREES so that CSREES may determine whether any further action is needed. In some cases, however, the preparation of environmental data may not be required. Certain categories of actions are excluded from the requirements of NEPA.

In order for CSREES to determine whether any further action is needed with respect to NEPA, pertinent information regarding the possible environmental impacts of a particular project is necessary; therefore, Form CSREES-2006, "NEPA Exclusions Form," must be included in the application indicating whether the applicant is of the opinion that the project falls within a categorical exclusion and the reasons therefore. If it is the applicant's opinion that the proposed project falls within the categorical exclusions, the specific exclusion(s) must be identified.

Even though a project may fall within the categorical exclusions, CSREES may determine that an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary for an activity if substantial controversy on environmental grounds exists or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present which may cause such activity to have a significant environmental effect.

17. Appendices to Project Description

Each Project Description is expected to be complete; however, additions to the Project Description (appendices) are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed research and are strictly limited to a maximum of 2 of the following:

- (a) Reprints (papers that have been published in peer-reviewed journals); and
- (b) Preprints (only manuscripts in press for a peer-reviewed journal will be accepted and must be accompanied by letters of acceptance from the publishing journals).

Preprints sent in support of the application should be single-spaced and printed on both sides of the page. Each preprint must be identified with the name of the submitting organization, the name(s) of the PD(s), and the title of the application, and be securely attached to each copy of the application.

Staff of the NRI will not collate applications or application addenda. Information may not be appended to an application to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the Project Description. Extraneous materials will not be used during the peer review process.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received by COB on October 5, 2004 (5:00 p.m., Eastern Time). Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

Pursuant to Section 710 of the General Provisions of the FY 2004 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 108-199), indirect costs are limited to 20 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, the recovery of indirect costs under this program area may not exceed the lesser of the institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 20 percent of total Federal funds awarded. Another method of calculating the maximum allowable is 25 percent of the total direct costs.

Funds may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research spaces (including energy retrofitting); purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such spaces; or planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

E. Other Submission Requirements

1. What to Submit

An original and 14 copies of the application are required and 2 additional copies of the Project Summary, Form CSREES-2003, as a separate attachment. All copies of the application and the Project Summary must be submitted in one package.

2. Multiple Submissions

Duplicate, essentially duplicate, or predominantly overlapping applications submitted to one or more program areas within the NRI (including the programs described under Agricultural Research Enhancement Awards in the initial NRI announcement) in any one fiscal year **will be returned without review**. In addition, applicants also may not submit to the NRI an application that is considered duplicate, essentially duplicate, or predominantly overlapping with an application submitted to another CSREES program in the same fiscal year.

3. Where to Submit

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by the USDA. The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using an express mail or overnight courier service is:

National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program c/o Proposal Services Unit
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 1420, Waterfront Centre
800 9th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Telephone: (202) 401-5048

Applications sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be sent to the following address:

National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program c/o Proposal Services Unit Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service U.S. Department of Agriculture STOP 2245 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20250-2245

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the Form CSREES-2002. If the applicant's e-mail address is not indicated, CSREES will acknowledge receipt of the application by letter.

If the applicant does not receive an acknowledgment within 60 days of the submission deadline, please contact the program contact. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, please cite that number on all future correspondence.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

See initial NRI announcement.

B. Evaluation Criteria

In carrying out its review, the peer review panel shall take into account the following factors.

Scientific merit of the application for research, extension and/or education, including:

- (a) Novelty, innovation, uniqueness, and originality;
- (b) Where model systems are used, ability to transfer knowledge gained from these systems to organisms of importance to U.S. agriculture;
- (c) Conceptual adequacy of the research, extension, and education components, as applicable;
- (d) Clarity and delineation of objectives;
- (e) Adequacy of the description of the undertaking and suitability and feasibility of methodology;
- (f) Demonstration of feasibility through preliminary data; and
- (g) Probability of success of project.

Qualifications of proposed project personnel and adequacy of facilities, including:

- (a) Qualifications of applicant (individual or team) to conduct the proposed project, including performance record and potential for future accomplishments;
- (b) Demonstrated awareness of previous and alternative approaches to the problem identified in the proposal;
- (c) Institutional experience and competence in subject area; and
- (d) Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation.

Planning and administration of the proposed project, including:

- (a) Time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives; and
- (b) Planned administration of the proposed project and its maintenance, partnerships, collaborative efforts, evaluation and monitoring efforts, and the planned dissemination of information over the duration of the project.

Relevance of the proposal to improvements in and sustainability of U.S. agriculture, including:

- (a) Documentation that the research, extension, and/or education activities are directed toward current or likely future issues or priority areas identified in this document;
- (b) Evident linkage of research, extension, and education functions, as appropriate;
- (c) Evidence of involvement of stakeholders and/or communities of interest.

In addition to the application criteria above, applications considered for bridge grant support will also be judged based on the potential that further funding will sustain and enhance important collaborations and activities that might lead to future program success or success in obtaining other grants.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

See initial NRI announcement.

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

See initial NRI announcement.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Siva Sureshwaran; National Program Leader; Competitive Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2243; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2243; Telephone: (202) 720-7536; Fax: (202) 401-6070; E-mail: ssureshwaran@csrees.usda.gov or Diana Jerkins; National Program Leader; Competitive Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2243; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2243; Telephone: (202) 401-6996; Fax: (202) 401-1782; E-mail: djerkins@csrees.usda.gov.

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

See initial NRI announcement.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE NATIONAL RESEARCH INITIATIVE COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

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3. Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003)	1	
4. Project Description (see instructions for page limitations)		1
5. References to Project Description		
6. Facilities and Equipment		
7. Key Personnel (vitae and publications list)		
8. Collaborative Arrangements (including letters of support)		
9. Conflict of Interest List(s) (Form CSREES-2007)		
10. Results from Prior NRI Support (If applicable)		
11. Budget (Form CSREES-2004)		
12. Budget Narrative		
13. Matching (if required)		
14. Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)		
15. Assurance Statements (Form CSREES-2008)	1	
16. NEPA Form (Form CSREES-2006)	1	
17. Appendices to Project Description (see instructions)		
18. Personal Data on Project Director(s) (Page B of Form CSREES-2002) (submit only with original copy of application)		

Flow Chart for Bridge Grant Eligibility

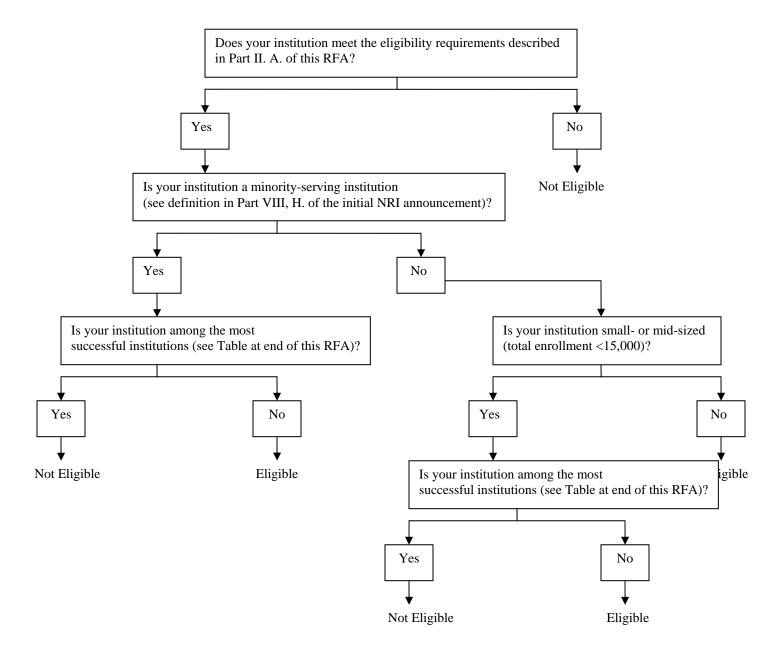


Table to Determine Eligibility for Bridge Grants

Most Successful Universities and Colleges Receiving Federal and/or National Research Initiative Funds¹

Arizona State University Main Campus *

Auburn University *

Baylor College of Medicine

Boston University Brown University

California Institute of Technology Carnegie-Mellon University

Case Western Reserve University

Clemson University *

Colorado School of Mines *

Colorado State University Columbia University

Cornell University

CUNY Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Dartmouth College Drexel University * Duke University Emory University

Florida International University * George Washington University

Georgetown University

Georgia Institute of Technology

Harvard University

Indiana University Bloomington *

Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis

Iowa State University
Johns Hopkins University
Kansas State University *

Louisiana State University

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Medical College of Wisconsin Medical University of South Carolina

Michigan State University

Michigan Technological University *

Mississippi State University Montana State University * New Mexico State University *

New York University

North Carolina State University North Dakota State University * Northwestern University

Ohio State University
Oklahoma State University *
Oregon Health Sciences University

Oregon State University Pennsylvania State University

Princeton University
Purdue University
Rice University *
Rockefeller University

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Scripps Research Institute

South Dakota State University *

Stanford University

State University of New York at Binghamton *
State University of New York at Buffalo
State University of New York at Stony Brook

State University of New York Col. of Envir. Sci. & Forestry *

State University of West Georgia *

Texas A&M University
Texas Tech University *
Thomas Jefferson University
University of Alabama Birmingham
University of Alaska Fairbanks

University of Arkansas Fayetteville *

University of Arizona

University of California Berkeley University of California Davis University of California Irvine University of California Los Angeles University of California Riverside * University of California San Diego University of California San Francisco University of California Santa Barbara University of California Santa Cruz *

University of Chicago University of Cincinnati

University of Colorado Boulder

University of Colorado Health Sciences Center *

University of Connecticut University of Delaware * University of Florida University of Georgia University of Hawaii Manoa University of Idaho * University of Illinois Chicago

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

University of Iowa University of Kansas University of Kentucky University of Maine Orono *

University of Maryland Baltimore Prof Sch University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute *

University of Maryland College Park University of Massachusetts Amherst *

University of Massachusetts Medical School Worcester University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

University of Miami

University of Michigan Ann Arbor University of Minnesota Twin Cities

University of Mississippi *

University of Mississippi Medical Center *

University of Missouri Columbia University of Missouri Rolla * University of Missouri St. Louis *

University of Montana *

University of Nebraska Lincoln *

University of Nevada Las Vegas *

University of Nevada Reno *

University of New Hampshire *

University of New Mexico

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

University of North Carolina Greensboro *

University of North Texas *

University of Notre Dame *

University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center *

University of Pennsylvania

University of Pittsburgh

University of Rhode Island *

University of Rochester

University of South Carolina Columbia *

University of South Florida

University of Southern California

University of Southern Mississippi *

University of Tennessee Knoxville *

University of Texas at Austin

University of Texas Health Sci. Center San Antonio

University of Texas Health Science Center Houston

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

University of Texas Medical Branch Galveston

University of Texas SW Medical Center Dallas

University of Utah

University of Vermont

University of Virginia

University of Washington

University of Wisconsin Madison

University of Wisconsin Stevens Point *

University of Wyoming *

Vanderbilt University

Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Wake Forest University

Washington State University *

Washington University

Wayne State University

West Virginia University *

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute

Yale University

Yeshiva University New York

¹Based on data from the table Federal obligations for science and engineering research and development to the 100 universities and colleges receiving the largest amounts, ranked by total amount received: in fiscal year 2000 of Federal Science and Engineering Support to Universities, Colleges, and Nonprofit Institutions (National Science Foundation, accessible through the Internet at: http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/nsf03326).

^{*}Annotated institutions are not in the list for the most successful Federally funded, but were among the top 50th percentile of those funded by the National Research Initiative (Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 450i(b)) over the past three years (fiscal years 1999 through 2001).

CHECKLIST

All applications submitted under the NRI must contain the applicable elements outlined in these guidelines. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the application is complete and in the proper order prior to mailing:

	Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002) Have all blocks been completed?		Has a list been completed for each person who must submit a C.V.? Does the list include the four
	Have all Project Directors and the Authorized Organizational Representative (when required) signed	0	categories as appropriate? Results from Prior NRI Support (if appropriate)
	the form? Does one copy contain pen-and-ink signatures?	0	Budget (Form CSREES-2004)
	Have you included a telephone number where a message may be left for you?		Are annual and summary budgets included?
_			Budget Narrative
	Table of Contents		Are budget items individually justified?
	Are page numbers included for each item?	0	Matching (if magnined)
	Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003)	Ц	Matching (if required)
	Has the Project Summary been included on the form?	0	Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)
	Do the name and institution of all Project Directors	_	Have all current and pending projects been listed and
	appear on the form, or on the following page?		summarized, including this one , for each Project
	Does the Project Summary include research, education,		Director listed on the Proposal Cover Page (Form
	and/or extension objectives, as appropriate?		CSREES-2002)?
	Does the Project Summary indicate that this is an	_	A GODDEG ANNO 1
	integrated project? Does the Project Summary fit within the designated box	0	Assurance Statement (Form CSREES-2008, where
	on the form?		applicable)Has the project been approved by necessary Institutional
	Has the appropriate "Proposal Type" box been checked?		Review Board(s)?
			Has the form been signed by the Authorized
	Project Description		Organizational Representative (where required)?
	Is the project fully described?	_	
	Does this section adhere to the format and page		NEPA (Form CSREES-2006)
	limitations? Does this section begin as page 1, as specified?		Has the NEPA form been completed and included?
	Does this section begin as page 1, as specified:	0	Appendices to Project Description
	References to Project Description		Are they limited to 2 (as described in the instructions)?
	Are all references cited?		,,
	Are all citations referenced?		General
	Do all citations contain a title, the names of all authors,		Have you included the Personal Data on Project
	and are they in accepted journal format?		Director(s) (Page B of Form CSREES-2002) only on
	Facilities and Equipment		the original application? Have you contacted the appropriate National Program
u	Have you given a description of your facilities and		Leader if you have questions about the suitability of
	equipment, sufficient to indicate that you will be able		the proposed work?
	to carry out this project?		Does the application conform to all format and page
_			limitations and deadline requirements?
	Key Personnel (Vitae and Publication Lists)		Is there an original and 14 copies of the application?
	Are vitae included for all Project Directors,		Are all copies complete?
	collaborators, and other senior personnel? Is the publication list complete and limited to the last		
	four years?		
0	Documentation from Collaborator(s) (where		
- -	appropriate)		

Conflict of Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)